

Cherry Mouse Babies

Christine Rotsaert

Kathy Kerber, Illustrator

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The story and pictures work together seamlessly in this thoughtful children's book.

Christine Rotsaert's *Cherry Mouse Babies* is an easy-to-follow story with friendly animals and unexpected characters who explore themes of love, friendship, and diversity.

Weefeefee is a mouse fairy who lives in an idyllic "green-aqua valley" surrounded by all his friendly animal pals. The end of his tail, his ears, and his eyes are all shaped like hearts, bringing love symbolism to the front. When Leebeebiee, a cherry fairy who lives on the "fruity mountain," arrives with her parents for a happy feet dance, she falls in love with Weefeefee immediately. Though they are from different fairy families, they soon have many cherry mouse babies.

Rotsaert's text is simple enough for even the youngest children to understand what's going on. The sparse amount of text on each page combined with the vibrant illustrations make it an unintimidating read, and the thoughtful subject matter opens up much discussion about the overarching themes.

Kathy Kerber's colorful pictures fill the pages with happy animals, humorously drawn fruit, and beautiful scenery, bringing the unusual story to life. It's one thing to read about Mama Applericoe and Papa Grapedeo at the happy feet dance or the cherry-fruit noses of the mouse babies, but it's another thing entirely to actually see all of them depicted in the story.

Rotsaert and Kerber want children to interact with *Cherry Mouse Babies*, and so the back of the book repeats illustrations—but not filled in with colors. These pages give children the opportunity to paint or color the pictures in on their own. Kerber includes animal outlines on many pages of the actual story for kids to color in as well.

In *Cherry Mouse Babies*, the story and pictures work together seamlessly, resulting in a thoughtful children's book.

KELLY THUNSTROM (February 3, 2017)

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